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LIVE-STOCK INDUSTRY IN URUGUAY

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Uruguay is a country not much larger than the State of Missouri. Its location, climate, rich soil and rolling prairie lands make it an almost ideal cattle and sheep-raising country. The climate is mild without snow in winter and without excessive heat in summer. At the present time raising cattle and sheep is the principal industry. Hog raising is carried on to a limited extent. Between 200,000 and 300,000 hogs are produced annually. This comparatively small production is undoubtedly due to the fact that corn, alfalfa and other foodstuffs essential to pork production are uncertain crops. In general the soil is black loam which in many places is slightly gummy. This soil is seldom more than four feet deep. We were informed that rock can generally be found at a depth of not more than four feet throughout the entire country. Over a large area rock is much nearer the top of the ground than four feet and in many places comes to the surface. There are periodical visitations of grasshoppers or locusts, which are very destructive to grain crops. The director of the Agricultural College at Montevideo stated that these pests visit the country every year, and some years they appear more than once, attacking different plants in different seasons. Rainfall at the right time for the production of corn is more or less uncertain. When it is also considered that methods of planting and cultivation are sometimes very crude, it will be readily seen that the growing of corn is very uncertain. A few of the farm or ranch owners in an effort to improve their methods of corn cultivation, have bought planters, disks and cultivators from implement dealers in the United States. While all of the above mentioned difficulties tend to retard developments they do not seriously interfere with cattle and sheep production.

Cattle and Sheep Graze Together

Large herds of cattle and sheep on the very large ranches graze together. The mild climate allows grass to remain green practically throughout the year

and feeding is very seldom necessary. Many of the breeders who are producing range bulls for sale sow oats for winter and early spring grazing to insure their bulls making good growth and being fat on sale day.

The last census, taken in 1916, shows the following numbers of live stock in Uruguay:

Cattle	7,302,446
Sheep	11,472,852
Hogs	303,958
Horses	567,154

According to one of the American packer representatives in Uruguay one packing plant in Montevideo slaughtered more cattle than any other plant in the world during the year 1919. This indicates the importance of the Uruguayan cattle industry.

The beef breeds rank in numbers about as follows: Herefords, Shorthorns, Angus, Polled Herefords, Polled Shorthorns. All of these breeds do well, but the percentage of Herefords is much larger than any of the others. The Native, a reddish cream or black colored animal, is a very large breed which crosses well with the Hereford, Angus, and Shorthorn, and at the age of three years produces excellent beef. Such steers were selling for 7 cents per pound in August and September, 1920.

A large number of breeders and owners were visited in Uruguay and all had good equipment for handling cattle. Most of them appreciated the standard types of North American cattle, but they seemed to have the impression that they are somewhat smaller than the English type and that the more rangy steers from the latter country are larger. However, they are now discovering that the compact, short-legged animal is very heavy in proportion to its appearance.

Nearly all ranchmen own a purebred herd of cattle and some own several. In addition to the purebred herd they usually have a high-class herd of grade animals, which are really purebred, but can not be registered, and frequently another herd of lower grade animals from which steers are produced. If the bulls from the high-grade herd are well marked they are given extra attention and sold into Brazil for breeding purposes. On a few ranches we saw both American and English bred cattle and almost invariably the American bred cattle were in better flesh than the English animals found in the same pasture. We visited these places in the spring of the year after what was said to be a rather severe winter. Several of the ranchmen with whom we talked expressed a preference for American bred bulls. It

seems probable that crossing native cows with American bred bulls would produce an animal that would mature earlier and feed better through the winter. According to information obtainable these camp (range) bulls, when immune to tick fever, sell at about the following prices: Herefords \$400 to \$500 each; Shorthorns, \$300 to \$400; Angus about \$250 each.

Striking Differences

There are rather striking differences between North American cattle and those in Uruguay as regards type. The bulls seen in largest numbers in Uruguay are a trifle larger, longer in body, leg and neck, and rather plain in the head. They lack the compactness, short leg and early maturing qualities of the North American cattle. The type of cow, however, is similar to that seen in the United States. At the time Uruguay was visited a drought was in progress and many of the cattle were very thin. It was noticeable, however, that the more compact, deep bodied animals withstood the drought much better than the more rangy type of animal. This fact, together with earlier maturing qualities and greater hardiness, usually enables the North American cattle to withstand the tick fever with fewer losses. For these reasons many Uruguayan breeders are looking to the United States for their breeding stock.

Almost all of the southern half of Uruguay is tick-free territory and some of the breeders have ranches in both the north (tick territory) and south. In some instances the breeders produce their sale bulls in the tick-free territory and give them good care for the first year in order that they may get as much growth as possible, then take them to another ranch in the tick section where they are immunized and sold. A small per cent die, but this loss is probably not as great as it would be if the breeding herd was maintained in the tick section.

Different methods of immunizing cattle are used, but the most satisfactory seems to be one in which the animals, when 12 to 20 months old, is taken into the infected territory and a few ticks allowed to infect it. After the animal contracts the fever it is given the best care possible. If too many ticks adhere to the animal it is dipped and another effort to infect it made. It is claimed that by this method the losses are reduced to a minimum.

At present tick fever and foot and mouth disease are the two greatest problems facing the breeder in Uruguay. Many breeders in that country believe the tick a necessary evil because their principal bull market is in

Brazil which is a tick country. In order to dispose of their bulls profitably they must be immunized against the tick fever. As the loss is very small when the animals are infected as calves the method used by some breeders is to have the calves dropped in the tick territory. It is not advisable, therefore, to send cattle over 24 months of age to Uruguay unless it is known that they are not going into tick territory. It is believed that if special care is given at the proper time that the North American pasture-raised cattle will go through this fever with very small loss. Last year a shipment of 165 cattle went to Uruguay and at least 52 of them were sent to the tick regions. One man who imported 10 from the United States lost 4, while another who received 30 lost 2. Two others who received 6 each escaped loss. The man who reported a loss of 4 imported 12 from England and lost all except one.

A Great Menace

The foot and mouth disease is also a great menace to the live-stock industry in Uruguay. It occurs once and sometimes twice each year, thus keeping the breeders in constant fear of the damaging results. Sometimes it is very light and comes at a time when the calves are large enough to go through it with only slight loss. Of course, this disease always causes considerable loss in flesh, but since the cattle fatten quickly on the cheap grass this loss is not considered serious. On the other hand, if the disease comes at calving time or just before a sale or show, when the animals have been given extra attention and high priced feed for a considerable time, the loss is very heavy. The bulls lose flesh and occasionally one is rendered useless by this disease. Cows very frequently abort and young calves die of hunger and fever because the mothers can not supply them with milk while afflicted with this disease. We were told that in some instances only about 20 to 30 per cent of the steers on the range contract foot and mouth disease while in some of the breeding herds, during calving season, as high as 25 per cent of the calf crop is lost.

Despite these conditions, however, the Uruguayan stockman is making a great success of his business. At one ranch visited 1,400 three and four-year old steers were sold for approximately \$83 per head, the owner stating that they represented a net profit of \$55 each.

Dairying

Specialized dairying has not been developed to any great extent, but as the population increases, will doubtless become more important. A few Holsteins have been imported from the United States and are giving splendid results. Jerseys, Guernseys and Ayrshires, however, are not used extensively.

In Uruguay it is quite a common practice to milk only once each day. The calf is separated from its mother in the evening and in the morning a part of the milk is taken from the cow, after which the calf is returned to its mother and allowed to remain the rest of the day. In this way milk enough produced to supply the city demand, is produced.

Green feed is available throughout the year, the climate is mild, and usually milk brings a fair price.

Sheep Raising

The sheep industry is a very important one in Uruguay. Statistics show that more than 11,000,000 sheep were on the ranches in 1916, and according to 1919 slaughter records the number has increased considerably since that time. On many ranches there are as many sheep raised as cattle. They graze scattered out on pastures with cattle and in the same manner as the latter instead of herding in bunches as do most of the fine wool sheep in this country. Ranch owners reported good results under such management.

The most popular breeds are Lincoln and Romney Marsh, with a few Shropshires, Hampshires, and Rambouillets. The Lincoln and Romney Marsh are preferred because they graze satisfactorily with the cattle, are large, hardy mutton type, and with little attention raise about 85 per cent lambs each year. Both breeds, however, produce rather coarse wool, and since the price of coarse wool has been very low for some time past, there has been some crossing with Rambouillet rams in order to produce a finer fleece. This has already caused considerable demand for Rambouillet rams and it seems probable that this demand will increase.

On some of the ranches it is estimated that the wool clip, lamb crop, and increase in weight of the wethers, practically pay one running expenses of the ranch, leaving returns from the cattle operations as net profit.

Sheep are also effected by foot and mouth disease, but losses are seldom as great as in cattle.

Horse Industry

The horse industry is confined largely to the native breed, which is similar to our western range horse. This type of horse weighs about 700 pounds, has great stamina, and is used almost exclusively for riding. Some of the more progressive breeders, however, have imported Percherons, Clydesdales, Shires, and Suffolks from France and England, and have for some time been breeding a number of large horses. They are now beginning to break them and use them to work in the fields. These men are using modern machinery, raising corn, and making silage.

Live-Stock Shows in Uruguay

There are two principal live-stock shows in Uruguay, the National Live-Stock Show at Montevideo, and the live-stock show at Salto, situated in the northwestern part of the republic. Both of the 1920 shows were visited. The one at Montevideo was the 15th Annual Exposition. This show is managed each year by the Rural Society of Uruguay and is almost exclusively a cattle show. It was not large, less than 300 head of cattle, about 85 sheep and 50 hogs being exhibited. Of the sheep about 60 were Lincolns and Romney Marsh and the others Merinos. There were a few horses at the show, one a purebred Shire stallion and the remainder saddle and road horses. The poultry show was very good, most of the breeds found at shows in the United States being represented. The awards are all made before the formal opening. Cattle are shown in a large arena from which the public is barred. No one is allowed in this inclosure during the judging, except the herdsmen holding the cattle, the judge and the clerk. This plan enables the judge to arrive at his decision unhampered. On the other hand the public is denied a close-up view of the animals while they are being placed, thereby limiting to a certain extent the educational value of such placing. The buildings at the Montevideo show are fine large structures of brick and stone. They are built primarily for the purpose of housing cattle and horses, no provisions being made for hogs. Temporary pens are built for sheep and the hogs on exhibition at the 1920 show were placed in these sheep pens.

The Salto show is largely a cattle show, although there were about 350 head of sheep on the grounds. They were mostly Lincolns and Romney Marsh, but included quite a number of Merino and Rambouillet rams. Several ranch owners stated that they were considering using these fine wool rams on their coarse wool ewes, in order to produce a better quality of wool which would

be more salable.

There were about 400 purebred bulls and cows at this Salto show and approximately 1,000 range bulls. Probably 75 to 80 per cent of these cattle were Herefords. Most of the others were Shorthorns with only a few Angus. Many of the Brazilian ranchmen of southern Brazil go to the Salto show to buy their camp bulls. These are sold at auction during and after the show. Something like \$1,000,000 worth of these camp bulls were sold at Salto during the 1919 exposition. Last year trade was slow owing to droughts and depreciation in South American exchange and declining values in the wool market.

Each year the English Royal Society furnishes the judges for the Palermo Show in Buenos Aires and the same judges place the animals at the Montevideo Show. This system reduces the expense of supplying judges.

The champion and reserve champion Shorthorn heifer calves shown by one of the breeders were fitted by a Kansas man who went to South America last year with the first importation of cattle to Uruguay from the United States. These calves were strictly North American type and well fitted. It is believed that these two calves would have stood well up in the money had it been possible to have exhibited them at the International this year.

The most serious fault noted in a very large number of the cattle shown was their crooked, weak, faulty hind legs.

Sales

The general system of selling breeding animals in Uruguay is at public auction. Auction sale barns used exclusively for this purpose are located at Montevideo and other cities in the country. August and September are the important sale months. A custom has been established whereby ranchmen and farmers go to those centers to purchase their breeding stock. This custom practically insures a good attendance at the sale ring.

A few sales barns are located in the country around Montevideo, where sales of both purebred and high-grade (camp) bulls are sold. These sales are conducted very much as are purebred sales in the States, except that the auctioneer cries the bid he has instead of the one he wants. The auctioneers as a class are capable and sell on a commission basis. The commission is paid by the purchaser.

The sales held at the exposition grounds were not as good as many of the breeders expected although some of the bulls brought \$2,800 to \$3,740.

The highest price paid was for an American type bull which stood ninth in his class. The price was \$8,411. In many instances bulls of very inferior type and individuality sold for much more than the same kind would bring in the United States. Herefords sold for better prices generally than any other breed.

Many sales of imported Herefords were attended and those from England sold especially well. In one sale of 50 animals the average was \$3,740 with a top price of \$18,690. The next day a very good average was made on 50 head and the top price was \$25,233. Most of the bulls in these two sales were rough three-year-olds and those in the first sale were overloaded with fat.

The cattle from the United States arrived in fair condition and those seen on the ranches were doing well. It was predicted that these 18-months-old cattle would give excellent results in Uruguay and it was stated that a very large percentage of those taken into tick territory went through the fever with very small loss. It is very doubtful if the 3-year-old very fat cattle will give good results in tick territory.

The live-stock men are especially well informed regarding their business and are striving continually to improve their cattle and sheep. They have excellent herds and doubtless will sell large numbers of breeding animals into Brazil in the future. It is the opinion of many breeders that considerable trade will develop between the United States and Uruguay if the rate of exchange returns to normal, and especially if the cattle can be successfully immunized so that good results can be secured.

Just now the demand appears to be for Hereford, Shorthorn and Angus cattle, a few Poland-China and Duroc-Jersey hogs, and Ramboillet rams. If the people begin farming there may be a small demand for heavy horses, but it is doubtful if this will come for some time.

It is very doubtful if many breeders will come to the United States to buy their stock because other countries are taking them to Montevideo and selling them at auction. Under this arrangement all the Uruguayan breeder needs to do is to pay his money and take away the animal selected. Naturally they would much rather do that even if they don't get as good animals, than to buy from the United States and spend so much money and time getting the animals home. For this reason, if a large business develops, it will depend largely upon the ability to get the animals to Uruguay so the breeders can see what they are buying without having to leave their business for several months.

After a careful consideration of all existing conditions it is recommended that those planning the development of a permanent foreign live-stock trade with Uruguay should do so only after careful consideration has been given to all the details relative to the exportation of live stock. It seems advisable that some reliable auction firm or dealer in Uruguay who knows conditions well should be consulted before shipments are made, and that animals should not be offered for sale until they are in good flesh.

It is a question whether or not hogs or sheep should be sent into Uruguay except on order. There is only a limited demand for them and anyone sending such stock to be sold at auction may easily be disappointed with the returns. It is possible that in a few years the demand may increase to such an extent that consignment sales will be justified.

Before shipment of any animals is made careful inquiry should be made relative to the latest requirements including quarantine, export papers, pedigrees, transfers, and how all documents should be signed and legalized.

The Uruguayan Government requires a quarantine of 30 days for cattle and 15 days for sheep and hogs immediately after unloading. Before leaving the United States all breeding cattle must be tested for tuberculosis by a United States official. Hogs should be tuberculin tested for the protection of the shipper. The Uruguayan Government will not accept the test certificates from other countries, but makes a test on its own account of all cattle and hogs coming into the country.

